

8. Education and Training

Overview

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	2002 (actual)	2003 (actual)	2004 (estimated)
Total Market Size	55.0	62.0	69.0
Total Local Production	28.0	30.0	32.0
Total Exports	0	0	0
Total Imports	27.0	32.0	37.0
Imports from the U.S.	7.0	10.0	13.0

The above statistics are in US\$ million and are unofficial estimates.

Significant demand for educational and training development currently exists in Vietnam. Strong industrial growth and expanding foreign investment is generating the need for a variety of workplace skills that currently do not exist in sufficient numbers. Creating a better-trained workforce will be a key pillar to Vietnam sustaining long-term economic growth and developing an internationally competitive workforce. To this end, over the last few years, the Vietnamese Government has increased budget allocations, liberalized private sector involvement, and encouraged foreign participation in developing education and training services in Vietnam. The Government has developed a long-term Education Development Strategy from 2001 to 2010, and estimates that the share of education expenditure needs to be increased to 6.9 percent of GDP and 20 percent of total government expenditure by 2010.

Best Products/Services

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The best prospects for U.S. providers are English language training, vocational and technical training (including information technology and basic manufacturing skills), post-secondary education (including overseas study programs), and consulting services.

English has become the language of choice for Vietnamese in pursuit of better educational and career opportunities. State-owned institutions, public schools, and English learning centers are focused on upgrading both standard and specialized English courses. Schools and centers specializing in TOEFL and IELTS training for study abroad will find rapidly expanding markets in Vietnam's major cities.

With a large portion of the jobs needed in Vietnam's transitioning economy dependent upon the acquisition of technical skills, vocational education issues have taken on significant prominence. The demand for skilled workers and production technicians is already acute and will become ever more intense as the industrial and services sectors become the dominant provider of employment.

Post-secondary education is divided into two distinct types: foreign education programs established in Vietnam and overseas study. Both foreign education programs and study abroad have become important and popular elements of higher education in Vietnam and are widely seen as the key to future success. There are an increasing number of students who are able to

contribute significantly to funding their education, although scholarship programs remain important for many seeking overseas study opportunities. The Government has also been involved in implementing its own programs to foster the further study abroad of officials in an effort to raise the quality of public services.

Opportunities

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A significant increase in per capita income in the past ten years, a booming private sector, and the traditional value Vietnamese place on education are creating significant opportunities for education and training services. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has encouraged foreign educational businesses to become involved in the education and training sector, especially in the development of new disciplines such as information technology and environmental science, and other scientific fields that are not yet widely available in Vietnam.

A part of higher education that is growing quickly within Vietnam is the establishment of foreign education programs run either entirely by foreign universities or through cooperation between foreign and Vietnamese institutions. The sector received a large boost in 2000 with the enactment of Decree No. 06/2000/ND-CP, dated March 6, 2000, which provided incentives for foreign investment in several areas, including education and training. Foreign entities are encouraged to develop training programs for scientists, technicians, managers, and experts in economics, technology, natural sciences, the environment and culture.

The Government has identified vocational education as a major area for future investment and improvement over time. Under State targets, 30 percent of the country's workforce would ideally receive vocational training by 2005, and 40 percent by 2010. Priority will be given to training workers for high-tech fields such as information technology, biology, materials engineering and automation, as well as economic and social management. Foreign-invested companies with foreign curricula and teaching methodologies are very competitive as contracting clients for vocational training programs in Vietnam. There is also a major opportunity for firms that can provide customized workforce training for basic manufacturing facilities, such as those in the rapidly growing garment and footwear industries.

Investment in and development of information technology and E-Government sectors have received special attention from the highest levels of Vietnam's Government. In this regard, the Prime Minister issued Decision No.112 in 2001 approving a project on state administrative management computerization for the period 2001-2005. Vietnam's overall objectives for the project include organizing IT training courses for public servants to aid them in accessing and making use of new technology during the normal work routine.

Education and training consulting opportunities for U.S. firms stem mainly from Official Development Assistance (ODA)-financed projects, including World Bank and Asian Development Bank initiatives to upgrade the training, curriculum development, and equipment of the country's secondary and post-secondary education system.

Resources

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Vietnam's education and training information and projects are available at the following major websites:

The World Bank: www.worldbank.org/vn

The Asian Development Bank: www.adb.org/Vietnam

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